

## Love Languages

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## Love Languages

by [Not4typicalwriter](#)

### Summary

Karl was struggling, trying to speak through his shuddering breath. "And you just told me you loved me, for the first time, during a fight."

"Well I do. Of course, I do," Sapnap said softly. "And I'm sorry if what I did, earlier or ever in the course of our relationship, has ever convinced you that I don't."

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Five times Karl and Sapnap didn't say I love you, and the one time they did.

(Royalty AU, Knight-Sapnap and Knight-Karl Jacobs)

### Notes

I think I went overboard, this is so much longer than I expected a Karlnap one-shot to be.

Also, I feel like some of the scenarios weren't really in theme with the whole story but whatever I guess.

And it was supposed to be domestic and fluffy but it turned a little angsty towards and I don't know why.

It ends well, I promise.

Hope you enjoy it!

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

## 1

It was storming outside. Heaving pouring rain, wind roaring, and thunder striking. Unfortunately, Karl was on tower duty with Quackity. Thirty more minutes and they get to swap out, they get to change shifts.

"Karl," Quackity called. "I'm bored."

"Hi bored, I'm cold," Karl responded.

Karl was lying back on a stool, trying to pay attention to the book he had that he brought to try and pass the time at the tower. Tower duty isn't that bad, you really didn't have to do much but pay attention in case of break-ins.

He probably shouldn't have brought a book for a job that needs your attention. It wasn't too big of a deal though, he hasn't paid attention to the text he was reading at all.

"Do you know what's for dinner?" Quackity asked.

"No, I'm starving though," Karl admitted.

"We should've brought some snacks up here," Quackity said.

"Oh I would kill for some apples," Karl said, finally giving up and shutting his book. He was never going to get through that paragraph.

"Do you think there's food up here?" Quackity suddenly stood up from his stool.

"I mean, maybe," Karl's eyes scanned the little tower top they were in and his gaze fell on the chest tucked at the corner of the room. People don't really use that chest anymore, but it doesn't hurt to look.

Actually, the chest looked pretty clean. There were no dust marks at the top and the latch was even open. Quackity was trying to twirl his staff, not really paying attention to Karl at all. So Karl opened the chest. There were 2 bottles of water and about 5 apples and 2 little containers of berries.

"It's a miracle," Karl laughed, tossing an apple to Quackity who cheered.

Karl took an apple and wiped it against his shirt before taking a bite into it.

"They store food in that thing?" Quackity asked between the bites of his apple. "This apple is fresh."

"I know, it's weird," Karl said. "I was *just* saying that we should-

A little paper inside the chest caught Karl's eye. It had slipped down from where he assumed it was placed at the top of the pile of apples, now tucked against the chest wall.

He picked it up, forgetting that he was even in the middle of the sentence, and read the note.

*Got you blueberries too.*

- S

Karl smiled and pocketed the note.

"Yeah, I was just telling Sapnap that we should start putting food up here," Karl said.

Karl took another bite of his apple before opening a container of berries that he could share with Quackity. With a snack and some light conversations, the rest of the shift went by quickly.

The rain hasn't stopped though, so Karl and Quackity had to traverse through puddles, mud, and wind just to run back into the palace. They were soaking wet when they stepped into the palace.

"I don't know about you, but I'm getting dinner," Quackity said.

"I think I might shower first, I feel icky," Karl shivered.

And with that, they left for opposite directions.

Karl could hear the splats of his steps as he walked down the hallway. He said hi to Ponk and to HBomb, before going into his room.

His room was warm, and it smelled like beans and meat. What is that sound? Is the water running?

"Hey, I got the hot shower on for you," Karl heard Sapnap's voice as he stepped out of the bathroom. "You could also eat dinner first if you want before it gets cold." Sapnap pointed at a plate of food sitting on Karl's table with a glass of juice.

Karl felt like he was going to cry. Just combust, right there in pure happiness. He was nearly speechless.

"I want to hug you, but I'm wet and dirty," Karl said softly.

"That's okay," Sapnap shrugged, walking closer. "I'll just-" He smirked mischievously. "-hop in the shower with you."

Karl broke into a grin and pulled Sapnap into a kiss. Karl was in fact, wet and dirty, but Sapnap did not hesitate to pull Karl into an embrace, hands wrapped tightly around his body that immediately warmed Karl from his shivering mess.

"Though," Karl said as he pulled away. "I may want to have dinner first if that's the plan."

"Sounds good to me."

Sapnap knew it would be a bad week when he woke up shivering. A fever is not it right now, this is not happening.

Oh but it's happening.

Sapnap felt his stomach turn, his throat burns with acid, and he knew he had to run for the bathroom. Kneeling over the toilet bowl he threw up whatever his stomach had, which was essentially nothing.

He hadn't had breakfast, it's the crack of dawn. But he still feels like he's going to throw his intestines up.

Cold beads of sweat were forming on his forehead, he was dizzy. Skull crushing headache like the kind you get from mining fatigue but so much worse. He sat on the floor, unwilling and unable to move, resting his head against his arm. Eyes blinking slowly through the burn. He ought to go back to bed, or so something. Maybe a shower?

He was just tired, his neck ached, his everything ached actually. He was struggling to move or even keeping his eyes open, and then he just wasn't.

He wasn't moving, his eyes weren't open, he couldn't do anything but hear the knock on his door. He couldn't even call out to answer. He heard Karl's voice call out to him, but passed out before anything else could be done.

--

Sapnap woke up with a cold towel pressed against his forehead. Little droplets of water were rolling down his face getting wiped away by a gentle thumb. He blinked awake, realizing that he's tucked into bed nice and tight.

"What-" Sapnap croaked.

"Hey," Karl said softly, his hand gently cupping Sapnap's face. "There you are."

"What happened?" Sapnap asked.

"I found you on the floor," Karl said. "Had to get Dream to help get you back into bed."

"I don't-" Sapnap sighed, his eyes blurry and head heavy against the pillow. "I don't understand."

"Dream's gone down with a cold, you just got the worse end of things," Karl said. "This is why I told you not to trident race in the rain yesterday," he sang naggingly.

"It was fun though," Sapnap chuckled.

"You could've at least dried off first," Karl said. "You just slept in bed all wet and damp, I had to wake you up get you in the shower."

"Sorry," Sapnap mumbled.

"You'll be alright," Karl said lovingly. "Philza gave you some medicine. Do you want food or you do feel like you're going to vomit it out?"

"I can do with some food," Sapnap said.

"I'll be back with some soup," Karl said. "Keep the towel on your head, it'll cool you down."

Karl kissed his own thumb before pressing his thumb to Sapnap's lips like a transfer of a kiss. Sapnap chuckled and smiled up Karl who waved before leaving his room.

Seconds later the door opened but it wasn't Karl that came in. Instead, Dream came in, a blue blanket wrapped around his shoulder, sniffling as he shuffled across the room and fell on the empty side of Sapnap's bed.

"Headache?" Dream asked.

"The worst," Sapnap sighed.

"Worth it," Dream chuckled.

"Hey, I won that race," Sapnap said warningly.

There was a loud crash outside. They heard Tommy yell, followed by Wilbur's, Tubbo's, and Philza's shouts respectively.

"Oh headache, headache-" Sapnap complained.

"Maybe it wasn't worth it," Dream whined. "I hate this."

"You only have a cold, stop complaining," Sapnap said.

"And a headache," Dream corrected. "At least you got someone taking care of you."

"You would too if you told George," Sapnap said.

"George isn't gonna take care of me, he's just gonna nag. He's gonna throw me in the infirmary and nag," Dream complained. "Besides he's the king, he's busy."

"Does he even know you're sick?" Sapnap said.

"No. I am not telling George I'm sick. Are you not listening? I'll never hear the end of it," Dream said. "I've been trying to avoid him all day."

"No one's snitched yet?" Sapnap asked.

"Someone did. Why do you think I'm here?" Dream mumbled.

"He's gonna find you," Sapnap hummed. "This is literally the first place he's going to-

The door swung open and again, it wasn't Karl. As if he was summoned, the king had entered the room.

"No.." Dream moaned.

"Right," George said in a warning tone. "Like I wouldn't notice that you didn't show up when we're supposed to leave for Mathea 20 minutes ago."

"Oh, that was today?" Dream groaned, struggling to roll off the bed. "I'm sorry, I'm good, I'm good, let's go!"

"I canceled," George said. "Told them I'll come once my bodyguard isn't a walking beacon of virus and sickness."

"Hello your majesty," Sapnap said sarcastically.

"I will be angry at you both after you feel better," George said. "Dream go to bed."

"Yes your majesty," Dream mumbled before leaving Sapnap alone in his room.

When his door opened for the third time, Sapnap was actually thankful it was Karl this time.

"Got your soup," Karl sang as he entered the room. He placed the bowl down on the nightstand before sitting down on Sapnap's bedside. "Are you good to eat yourself or do you want me to feed you?"

Such a simple question but it surprised Sapnap that there was no condescending tone attached to it. It was a question, a genuine question from someone who cared about him.

"I can eat," Sapnap smiled as he slowly sat upright.

As Sapnap ate, Karl never left his side. Karl would pat Sapnap's lap, or cup his cheek, thumb softly caressing his face before removing it when Sapnap is about to eat. And Karl kept on talking too, he told Sapnap about his home, his family, his mother, laughing, eyes sparkling with joy. Even after Sapnap was done, Karl kept on talking.

He stopped after a bit though, checking Sapnap's temperature with the back of his hand on his forehead and throat.

"Looks like you're cooling down," Karl said. "Do you still have a headache? Do you want to take a nap?"

"Okay," Karl said. "You go to sleep and I'll come to wake you for dinner? Call me if you need me."

"Wait, I need you," Sapnap said, hands still holding on to Karl, not allowing him to leave.

"What's up?" Karl asked.

"Stay?" Sapnap asked.

Karl looked at Sapnap flatly, even though he felt his heart skip a beat. He chuckled before giving in.

"You're only gonna be clingy when you're sick?" Karl said teasingly as he crawled into the bed next to Sapnap.

"No," Sapnap said defensively, snuggling closer so he's lying on top of Karl's chest.

"Better not," Karl jokingly threatened as he held Sapnap closer.

Karl tangled his fingers on Sapnap's hair, playing with it as Sapnap closed his eyes. Karl was humming as Sapnap's breathing slowed down. And even when Karl knew Sapnap was already asleep, he never left his side. He never wanted to.

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Kind of stupid, let's be honest. He was just a little upset. He knows he shouldn't be, it's really not that big of a deal, but he was upset.

Actually, he was really upset.

Granted, Karl didn't announce to everyone when his birthday was, he only told the few people that asked. Quackity knew Bad knew. Now that he thought about it, why has Sapnap never asked?

He kinda knew the reason, I guess. His boyfriend never liked his own birthday so to him, it doesn't matter much.

And this was his first birthday at the palace, his first birthday with Sapnap.

He shouldn't be upset, he didn't know Sapnap's birthday until the day of either, and that was only because Dream had gotten Sapnap a cake and forced Sapnap to celebrate with everyone.

He felt bad not knowing, but in his defense, that was before they were dating.

He shouldn't be upset, he shouldn't. But-

"There you are," Sapnap greeted as he entered the kitchen.

Karl had been standing at the counter, staring at his potatoes and stew for the last 20 minutes.

"How's your day been so far, handsome?" Sapnap stood behind Karl and planted a kiss on his cheek before walking to get some water.

"It's good, it's good," Karl didn't know if his lying voice was obvious.

To be fair, he wasn't lying. His day was good, he jumped around on the trident with Ranboo, Bad taught him a few things about the upcoming treaty and how they were going to handle guests. It was a fairly simple day, and it was productive and light. Except for that time Sapnap said good morning on the training ground and didn't say happy birthday.

He should not be upset about this.

"That's good," Sapnap said, cracking his neck and back like he always does after a training session with Dream. "You have tower duty tonight right?"

"Yes," Karl answered shortly. He didn't mean to be harsh, but somehow it came out that way.

"The gate towers, or the north tower?" Sapnap asked.

"North, with Fundy," Karl said.

"You get off at ten, right?" Sapnap continued his questions.

"Yep," Karl said.

"How bout a sleepover after?" Sapnap grinned. He'd made his way back to Karl, arms wrapping around his torso, chin resting on Karl's shoulder. Sapnap softly left a trail of kisses up Karl's neck.

"I don't know, I think I would just be tired by then," Karl answered.

He does not know why he answered that.

Maybe just the thought of spending the night with Sapnap when he's still upset is exhausting. Or worse, how long could he really keep it together if he was together with Sapnap alone?

"Okay," Sapnap said. "Think about it and I'll check back with you after your shift. If not then I'll just kiss you good night."

"Sounds good," Karl said.

"I have to go somewhere so I won't get to eat dinner with you," Sapnap explained, fingers on Karl's chin as he slowly turned his face to see his. "See you later." Sapnap stole a kiss before walking out of the kitchen.

No happy birthday and no dinner. Day's just getting better, isn't it?

Karl spent the rest of the day in a trance. Word has gone out to some of his other friends due to Quackity wishing him a happy birthday in front of multiple people during dinner.

Everyone chimed in a happy birthday, Eret and Wilbur even insisting on singing. They were apologetic that they didn't know. He told them it was fine. It wasn't their fault they didn't know.

He meant it as well, he was very sincere about his statement.

So why couldn't he give his boyfriend the benefit of the doubt?

The bakery would be closed by now, and even if they didn't, it wouldn't be enough time to bake a cake for Karl. Tubbo vowed to get him a cake first thing tomorrow which Karl insisted was not necessary.

Dinner was soon over with the people finishing their night giving Karl a good birthday hug. He felt better then, he really did. Phil ruffling his hair, Niki squeezing the breath out of his, Wilbur forcing Tommy to give Karl a hug. It did bring a smile to his face.

"Happy Birthday man," Fundy said to him, as they hugged. "Sucks to have to work on your birthday huh?"

"I don't mind," Karl shrugged.

"Well alright then," Fundy said. "I have to go talk to Dream really quickly, I think he just got back. I'll meet you up there."

"Okay," Karl said as he headed towards the North Tower.

It was a nice night out, not too hot, not too cold. The sky was clear and the moon was very big and bright. Guess tower duty isn't so bad.

Karl had been walking around the tower, just because he had nothing better to do. It was his fourth time going around the room when he realized that it had been like 20 minutes and Fundy hadn't shown up yet.

*Where the honk is Fun-*

"Hey, baby," Karl's head snapped towards the stairs, watching his Sapnap emerge from the shadows. "Sorry, I'm late."

"Sapnap," Karl said. "What are you-" His eyebrows furrowed at the little basket Sapnap is carrying. "What are you doing?"

"Oh well," Sapnap brushed off. "I think Fundy understands when I asked to swap days so I can spend my boyfriend's birthday with him."

"You remembered," Karl gasped.

"Of course I did," Sapnap said.

"You don't like birthdays," Karl said softly.

"I don't like mine, but why wouldn't I like yours?" Sapnap asked. "It was the day you came into my world."

"That's not how it works, I'm older than you," Karl laughed.

"You actually thought I forgot?" Sapnap asked hands stretched out for Karl to take. Sapnap pulled Karl closer to him. "Oh, I'm sorry. I just wanted it to be a surprise."

"Well I'm surprised," Karl giggled. "I'm glad you're here."

"Oh this isn't the surprise," Sapnap smirked.

Karl tilted his head in confusion as Sapnap slowly pulled him out to the balcony. Sapnap leaned over the edge and yelled.

"Light it up, boys!"

Karl looked over the edge and saw his friends all at the field. He was trying to figure out what they were doing, but within seconds it was clear.

A flurry of fireworks shot to the sky exploding in a ray of purple showers. Karl heard his friends from the ground, yelling various cheers of happy birthdays out of sync, some breaking out into song again. Karl's gaze was fixated on the light show in the sky in front of him.

"Turns out purple fireworks isn't that easy to get or craft," Sapnap said. "Sorry I wasn't around all day."

"No, you don't have to be sorry, this is ridiculous," Karl gleamed. "I love it, thank you." He pulled Sapnap into a hug. Sapnap planted another kiss on Karl's cheek before placing one on the lips.

"I also have cake, Ana sends her love," Sapnap declared once they pulled away. "And I stole some wine from George's cellar."

"Sapnap!" Karl scolded.

"It's fine!" Sapnap giggled. "It's like a birthday present from the king."

Karl looked over the balcony one more time to see his friends celebrating his birthday even though he wasn't there, fireworks still launching at every other interval.

"Happy Birthday Karl,"

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"Karl, where are we going?" Sapnap asked.

"It's only a couple more minutes away, I promise," Karl said.

"We've been *almost there* for like half an hour Karl," Sapnap whined.

"You'll like it, you'll like it," Karl assured him.

"Okay, I trust you," Sapnap said.

Thankfully it was a bright and sunny day. They rode their horses down the dirt path, surrounded by miles of empty fields. When the trees start to appear over the horizon, Karl visible perked up.

"There it is!" Karl gasped. "Race you!"

With a flick, Karl and his horse took off, Sapnap following closely behind. They went a few minutes deep into the jungle before they were met with a lake. Big, blue, clear, and cool, a dock with a single boat tied next to it.

"Oh my god it hasn't changed at all," Karl gushed as he got off his horse, leading it to a tree where he secured the lead.

"You brought be here for a lake?" Sapnap said. "Don't get me wrong, it's a wonderful lake, but we got plenty of lakes in L'Manberg," he continued. "You brought us all the way to the next town over."

"Just trust me," Karl said.

Karl took the picnic basket he'd brought off the horse and took Sapnap's hand once he'd finished securing his horse's lead too. Karl didn't go to the dock, instead, he guided Sapnap towards a tree that was really close to the shore.

Karl laid down a large blanket and sat down, patting the spot next to him so that Sapnap would join him. Sapnap simply chuckled and obliged.

"Perfect day for a picnic right?" Karl said.

"Yes, it is," Sapnap said appreciatively, resting his back against the tree. "Will you tell me now why you brought us so far?"

"I grew up here," Karl said proudly. "Spent nearly every afternoon at this lake. Lying down on this tree, swimming at the lake, play sword fighting with my friends, broke my leg right there—" Karl pointed towards the dock. "Slipped," he explained shortly, chuckling with a hint of embarrassment.

Sapnap laughed along, pressing his forehead against Karl's shoulder. Karl scooted closer and held Sapnap's hand, placing it on his lap.

"I had a lot of good memories here," Karl said wistfully. "I thought I'd take you here to make more, maybe replace some."

Sapnap was smiling until the words registered. His eyebrows furrowed and he squinted at Karl.

"What do you mean *replace*?" Sapnap asked Karl. Karl bit his lip, looking guiltier as ever.

"I had my first kiss under this tree," Karl confessed.

"Karl," Sapnap said warningly. "This isn't romantic."

"Oh come on!" Karl whined. "The person I kissed left this place a really bitter taste in my mouth. I'm trying to steal it back with you."

"Karl-" Sapnap chuckled.

"Be a good boyfriend and steal it back for me," Karl asked. "Please."

Sapnap chuckled before tilting up Karl's chin, placing a soft kiss on his lips.

"Happy?" Sapnap asked as he pulled away.

"One more," Karl bargained. "And kiss me like you mean it this time," he said teasingly.

Sapnap scoffed before pulling Karl into a deep kiss. Sapnap pushed further until Karl was lying on the ground, Sapnap's hands on either side of his head, hovering on top of Karl as they kissed. They pulled away after a bit, Karl giggling up at Sapnap, hand tucked gently within his hair.

"Better?" Sapnap asked coyly.

"So much better," Karl said before pulling Sapnap into another kiss. "Keep going, the memory is almost fully replaced."

Sapnap laughed through the kiss. Sapnap broke the kiss for a bit, before going to leave a trail of kisses from Karl's lips, to the corner, to his jawline, and up towards his ear.

"Replaced yet?" Sapnap whispered sending shivers down Karl's spine.

Karl nervously laughed before nodding slowly, but Sapnap didn't stop. Instead, he trailed the kisses down to Karl's neck then his collar bone. Karl gasped before softly pushing Sapnap off.

"Karl," Sapnap whined.

"Maybe let's not ruin the sanctity of my childhood," Karl explained, now beat red all the way to his ears. "Also in the open, some poor child might come here to play like I used to and get traumatized."

"Why else would you bring me here is not to ruin the sanctity of your childhood and traumatize some children?" Sapnap asked mischievously.

"A picnic," Karl said and Sapnap rolled his eyes lovingly.

Karl had packed a wonderful picnic. Sandwiches, fruits, cheese, honey, and a nice bottle of sparkling that Sapnap suspected were also from George's cellar.

They sat and talked, tossed berried at each other to catch, and had a wonderful time. It was perfect. And soon it was time to go home.

As they packed the food and things back onto the horse, Sapnap noticed Karl's odd movements. Karl was glancing around, approaching Sapnap then not saying anything. He was awkward and weird.

"Is everything-" Sapnap asked. "Is everything okay? You're being a little weird."

"Well, I uh-" Karl bit his lip again. "So I might've lied."

"Wonderful, tell me more," Sapnap said sarcastically.

"You may not love this as much," Karl said. "But I have another surprise."

"Okay," Sapnap answered warily. "You're gonna take me into the woods and kill me and leave my body to never be found?"

"What? No!" Karl exclaimed. "I may have-" Karl shuffled more in his spot. "Remember that little wooden house next to that tall silo that you commented on before we got here?"

"Yes?"

"Do you want to have dinner with my mother?" Karl blurted out.

Sapnap's jaw dropped slowly, nerves and fear slowly creeping up to his neck.

"I know it's sudden, and I shouldn't have tricked you into making the trip, but I told her that I had a new special friend, and we had a day off-" Karl rambled.

Sapnap was staring at his boyfriend. He wasn't angry, and yeah maybe a little afraid but it was mostly nerves and shock.

"See I didn't know how to bring it up with you, and I can't really say no to my mother," Karl continued on. "And it wouldn't be long, we can still make it home before the sun's out, but we could also stay the night in my old room-

Sapnap felt a thousand thoughts go through his brain at once. Was he really going to meet Karl's mother? Was he ready? What if she doesn't like him? *Oh, go-*

"Baby?" Karl called and touched his hand.

And suddenly Sapnap was brought back to Earth. His eyes focused back onto Karl's face, guilty and nervous.

His Karl. Nothing else matters.

"I would love to meet your mother," Sapnap said slowly. "Should've given me a warning first, I would've put on a nicer shirt." He tried to joke even though his heart was still racing.

"You look perfect," Karl exhaled in relief. "Sapnap you're perfect." Karl leaned forward and gave Sapnap a kiss. "Alright let's go."

"Yeah," Sapnap mumbled as they got onto their horses.

It was barely a few minutes trip. I guess that should make sense, if Karl spent most of his time in the lake, it would obviously be close to his house. Sapnap wished it was a longer trip though, maybe he could get his mind straight before they approached the house.

Karl barely knocked on the door before it swung open revealing a middle-aged woman. Sapnap would definitely see the resemblance from the color of her hair and the way she smiled the same way Karl did.

"Hi, mom!" Karl chirped excitedly, immediately engulfing his mother into a hug.

"My boy," His mother said, squeezing him back. "My boy's home."

"Mom, I'd like you to meet-" Karl said after pulling away.

"Sapnap," Sapnap stepped forward, hand extended ready for a handshake.

"Sapnap," Karl's mother took Sapnap's hand but immediately pulled him in for a hug.

Sapnap was taken aback, not really sure what to do aside from looking at Karl for help. Karl just shrugged with a smile on his face. Sapnap eventually leaned into the hug, before she finally let go.

"Mrs. Jacobs, it is a pleasure to meet you," Sapnap said nicely.

"The pleasure is all mine," She said before turning to Karl, in an act of whispering but was not subtle enough. "You're right, he is handsome."

"Mom!"

5

Nine days. It's been nine days and that means they're three days late. Karl wanted to curse Sapnap for wasting his message to tell Karl he missed him, and now he was three days late and couldn't even tell Karl why.

"They'll be fine Karl," George's voice startled Karl out of his pacing at the palace foyer.

"Your highness," Karl said. "I'm sorry, I-"

"No need to explain yourself, I get worried too," George said easily. "But Sapnap isn't alone, he's with Dream, Sam, and Callahan. They'll be fine."

"They're late," Karl mumbled. "Three-"

"Three days," George confirmed. "I know."

"And he wasted his message to tell me he missed me," Karl said and George chuckled.

"I think he knew that the other three still had their messages and he could use his to tell you what he wanted you to know," George shrugged.

"What about the others?" Karl asked.

"Callahan said '*Ran into trouble*', Sam sent '*Be back late but ok.*', and Dream hasn't used his yet," George told him.

"How long ago was that?" Karl asked.

"Yesterday," George said.

"Right," Karl nodded. "I'm sorry, I'm being dramatic, I'll get right back to work."

"No, no," George assured him. "With work and romance together, it's inevitable. Why don't you take it easier today? Accompany me at the library. Dream usually does it, and it looks like we both need someone else at the moment."

"Okay," Karl answered softly.

So Karl went with the king and spent the day at the library. It wasn't as bad or boring as he thought it would be. George would tell him every once in a while about what he was doing, and ask for his opinion. He was able to grab a book from one of the shelves and read it to pass the time when George was deep in thought.

They would have breaks when George would sit back and tell him stories about Sapnap, Dream, and himself.

"Oh yeah, Sapnap once chased me down a river," George chuckled. "We were running so fast we lost the palace guards that were supposed to look after me. We got in so much trouble Sapnap was banned from the palace for like 3 weeks."

Karl was laughing.

"Nothing was ever going to happen to me though," George explained. "Sapnap chased me down, but even when he was 9 or 10 and we were playing, he wasn't ever going to let anything happen to me. He's protective like that."

"I can imagine," Karl agreed.

"I'm glad he found you, Karl," George said and Karl's cheeks blushed a bright pink. "And I'm glad you gave him a chance. He just never knows how to express his feelings."

"Tell me about it," Karl complained. "The absolute chaos that was him trying to tell me he liked me back then-"

"I remember," George laughed. "I guess you just have to see it from his actions. And Karl, when that man is in love with you, it's *very obvious*," George stated. "In the best way possible."

"Like what?" Karl asked.

"You think Dream's protective of me?" George said. "Sapnap runs on fire. His soul burns. He rarely says things, he shows it," George explained. "Dream will panic and fuss over me. Dream would fight if he had to, but his main goal will be my safety. Sapnap will slaughter through a courtyard of enemies for retaliation or revenge, to defend my honor, to prove a point. I could already be safe and he would still fight. And I'm *just* his King."

Karl did not remember when his heart started beating quicker. But something in him turned as the word *love* rang through his head.

"Acts of service, and gifts sometimes," George clarified. "Dream and I figured that out about Sapnap long ago."

Karl thought back to the times he'd wanted to tell his boyfriend the 3 words, 8 letters. He was still unsure, he didn't know why. It's not like they don't feel it, and it's not like he doesn't want to. It was more like they already know and it was just left unspoken.

"He told me about meeting your mother," George said.

"Did he?" Karl snapped back into the conversation.

"He was very excited about it, very happy about it," George said. "It's comforting. He didn't have the greatest relationship with his own family."

"Really?" Karl asked.

"I don't want to speak on his behalf, most of the things I know are out of pure convenience of being friends with him when we're children," George said. "I'm sure he'll tell you when he's ready."

Karl nodded with a small smile. The sun was setting and Karl was thankful that he barely noticed the hours of the day passing that Sapnap isn't home yet. He was on his way down for dinner, the infamous Sunday dinner with King George and the knights when he heard Eret yelling to open the gates.

"Looks like they're home after all," George said softly.

Karl looked at George, who chuckled and nudged Karl softly, seemingly allowing him to break position and run. Karl smiled and took off running for the courtyard, George following behind but walking a little more gracefully.

"You're late," Karl yelled out as he ran to Sapnap.

Sapnap perked up. He looked beaten and bruised, but his smile was uncontested. The second he went through the gates he dropped all his things in preparation for Karl running into his arms.

Dream looked at his friend and chuckled. While Sam and Callahan returned the horses and weapons to their respective places, Dream walked up to where George was leaning against a door. George was smiling at Karl and Sapnap, both looked like they were talking really quickly while still holding on to each other.

"Darling, I'm home in time for Sunday dinner—" Dream sang jokingly.

"And what time do you call this?" George asked with a smile, even though he rolled his eyes at

Dream. "You wanna explain?"

"Oh, I would love to explain," Dream said sarcastically. "*Somebody* wanted to get something nice for his boyfriend." Dream said accusingly, looking at Sapnap.

George followed his gaze and saw Sapnap holding out something small but very shiny, Karl gaping at it.

"He didn't—" George said. "You didn't—"

"Oh he did," Dream nodded. "We were on our way back and ran into a Wither. We could've run, but one Wither wasn't an issue for 4 knights—" Dream ruffled into his pocket and pulled something out. "-until another came, and then another one." He held his hand out and another two Wither Stars were lying on his palms.

"You're idiots," George commented as he picked up the Wither Stars and inspected it.

"And about 18 Wither skeletons, so I'd have to agree with you," Dream added. "On the bright side, we aren't looking too bad."

George and Dream both turned back to look at Karl and Sapnap, both still gushing and stealing kisses in the midst of conversation, absolute blissful joy.

"Alright then," George gave up. "Go take a shower and come to dinner," George told Dream as he tried to hand the stars back to Dream.

"Keep the stars," Dream told him. "What the hell am I gonna do with it?"

**6**

Walking into town was a fairly common thing that the two did. Especially when they were starting to get to know each other.

It was different today, and Sapnap didn't know why. Maybe it's the looks, the whispers. He knew it

was fine, most of the people in L'Manberg were accepting. Why did he feel like people were staring?

Karl has always been quite touchy. He's affectionate, kisses, handholds, hugs. They like to joke about how it's his love language although that wasn't a joke at all. It's never anything inappropriate, it's just little signs of love.

But today- somehow today, Sapnap has been self-conscious about it. He shouldn't be. It was nothing to be embarrassed about, and Karl was nothing to be embarrassed about.

It's a Thursday, Sapnap and Karl had to walk into town to inspect a Netherite chest-plate. Making things out of Netherite is quite hard, and the blacksmith doesn't have much experience, so George sent them down to inspect the first prototype before the blacksmith goes forward with the mass order.

"How does it fit?" Mr. Frossard asked.

Sapnap was closer to the size of the prototype chest-plate and therefore was the one forced to test fit it, and of course, model in it.

"Can you move?" Mr. Frossard asked. "Hands up, down, full range of motion? Sword-swinging, bow-drawing, trident-throwing?"

"Yeah," Sapnap said stretched his arm out, and waved around. "I think it's good."

"Hold on, I have this new bow design that I need to string up, and then you can test out with that," Mr. Frossard said. "Allow me 10 minutes to get it ready."

"Oh okay," Sapnap said as the blacksmith went to the back.

"It'll be more like 15 minutes," Raquel said. "I'm betting he doesn't even remember where he kept the bow."

"It's fine," Karl was the one who answered her. "We like spending time in town. Right Sapnap?"

"Yes," Sapnap answered although his eyes were looking out towards the town square. He liked people watching, but honestly this time, it was because he'd felt that someone was watching *him*.

"I like the look of the Netherite," Raquel commented. "It's darker than iron, less shiny. It'll be better to blend in if you're undercover."

"Yeah, yeah," Sapnap said dismissively.

"I'm imagining your entire fleet in armor, and you guys are going to look *so* good," Raquel said.

"I think he looks *very handsome* in Netherite," Karl joked, leaning in to kiss Sapnap on the cheek.

"True, true, your opinions are valid," Raquel said.

Karl pulled away and furrowed his eyebrows at Sapnap, who barely moved or even reacted to the kiss.

"And I mean, next stop after the armors would be the weapons then right?" Raquel sensed her friend was in a weird state and decided to continue on the conversation to take his mind off things.

"If only we can keep up with trying to mine Netherite," Karl answered, internally dismissing Sapnap's weird behavior. "It's not easy to find them let alone get them and take them back."

"But I mean," Raquel said. "Full Netherite is kinda sexy."

"Sexy isn't the goal," Karl laughed out loud.

"Hey, I'm thinking about your safety too. Full Netherite gear is the safest option. Safety is sexy," Raquel reasoned.

"Raquel honestly, just come to the palace if you want to see the knights train. I've invited you many times over," Karl rolled his eyes.

"Karl!" Raquel squealed. "Don't expose me like that, not in front of like, one of the head knights!" She pointed at Sapnap.

"It's fine! He's not even here," Karl said before looking back at Sapnap, who only moved his head a little bit to look between the shelves that cover the front window. Karl waved his hand in front of

Sapnap's eyes before Sapnap finally blinked and looked at him. "You alright there buddy?"

"I-" Sapnap said. "Yeah, yeah. I just thought I saw someone."

"Oh. You wanna go say hi?" Karl asked.

"No," Sapnap replied a little too quickly. "It's fine, I don't think it was them."

Sapnap turned and smiled at Karl who cupped his cheeks before kissing him again. Raquel softly awed as her father finally came out of the backroom.

"Here try this," Mr. Frossard handed Sapnap a bow and a blunt-headed arrow. Sapnap pulled it and aimed it towards a blank plywood, before releasing it.

"Full mobility," Sapnap confirmed.

"Wonderful!" The blacksmith cheered. "Alright, I should be good to get started on the rest of them. I also have a couple of swords and two crossbows if you don't mind taking back with you?"

"Yeah, we can do that," Karl nodded.

"Thank you. Raquel, if you'd give them the things, and I'll get started," Mr. Frossard said. "You will have to come back for the boots and helmet once they're done, and also the pants."

"Sounds good," Sapnap said.

The blacksmith waved them goodbye before he went back to work as Raquel collected a few swords and the crossbows, putting them into a leather satchel.

"Here you go," Raquel handed the things to Sapnap as she gave Karl a hug goodbye.

"Are you sure you don't want to come back with us?" Karl asked teasingly. "I heard Wilbur is doing parkour today with Sam and Callahan."

"Stop it!" Raquel scolded as she pushed the boys out of her father's shop. "I'll tell you when you should come next."

"Okay," Karl said cheerfully. "Bye!" He turned to see Sapnap lugging the weapons over his back. "Do you want me to help with that?"

"No, I'm okay," Sapnap replied.

"Alright," Karl said, taking Sapnap's hand and intertwining his fingers. "Are you sure you're okay?"

"Yeah, they're not that heavy," Sapnap assured him.

"Yeah but also the other thing," Karl said. "You looked kinda spooked earlier."

"It's nothing," Sapnap said. "We should head back."

"I mean, we *could* head back," Karl said. "Or we could hang out for a bit? Nice lunch in town?"

Sapnap pursed his lips, something he does when he's thinking. He didn't have much to do today, so he really contemplated on getting lunch with Karl in town. Karl giggled at his thinking face, leaning in to catch a kiss.

"Sapnap."

Sapnap felt his heart drop to his feet. Face immediately turned pale white when he registered the voice that called from his back. His intuition wasn't wrong, he knew it wasn't a good idea to be in town today.

Sapnap immediately shook his hand out of Karl's grasp, turning around so fast that Karl stumbled backward. Sapnap nearly dropped the weapons on the ground. And there he stood.

"Long time to see," The man said.

"Yeah," Sapnap managed to speak out.

"Who's your friend?" The man asked, looking at a very confused and frazzled Karl.

"I'm-"

"Knight. Works at the palace," Sapnap answered before Karl could even continue. "We had errands."

"Any time for lunch? Catch up?" The man said.

"No, I really can't," Sapnap said. "We have to bring these weapons back, and-"

"Well your friend can take them back," The man said. "I'm not going to be in town for very long."

Sapnap felt dread inside his bones as he slowly turned to look at Karl, who stared at him with confusion.

"Karl if you could please take this back to the palace, thank you," Sapnap said emotionlessly.

Karl nearly gawked at the words he was hearing, at whatever the hell just happened in front of him. He took the bag silently from Sapnap and walked away without another word.

--

He fucked up.

Sapnap definitely fucked up.

Sapnap was sprinting back to the castle, bursting through the gates and through the doors of the palace.

He knew Karl's schedule, he knew Karl's schedule. He ran straight to the North Tower.

"Ranboo, can I have the tower please?" Sapnap said the moment he reached the top.

"Sure, I-"

"Ranboo, don't leave me," Karl spoke up.

Karl was looking out of the balcony. The balcony where they'd shared the most wonderful memory on his birthday. Karl knew Sapnap was coming just from the sound of the footsteps up the stairs alone, and he hadn't made eye contact at all.

"I um-" Ranboo panicked.

"Please Ranboo, I'll take care of the rest of your shift, you don't even have to trade," Sapnap offered.

"Well, I-"

"Ranboo-" Karl finally turned, wanting to beg Ranboo to stay but instead caught Sapnap's eye. Karl immediately looked away towards Ranboo and saw how awkward and uncomfortable he was. He couldn't do that to Ranboo. "You can go, it's fine."

Ranboo quickly made his way down the stairs, leaving the North tower empty for the two of them.

"Karl," Sapnap called.

"No, no, don't talk to me Sapnap, not right now," Karl said harshly. "I only let Ranboo out because it's not right to put him in the middle of this."

"Please let me explain," Sapnap started.

"I'm angry," Karl said. "I am, so, so angry at you, I don't know what to do."

"I understand. I know you're angry," Sapnap began. "But I have a-"

"You asked *me*," Karl said. "I didn't ask you, you asked *me* out."

"I know!" Sapnap said. "Karl, I know."

"Oh, you know?" Karl challenged. "Okay, you know what you did? You- you- what? You're trying to hide the relationship now, hide me?"

"That wasn't the intention," Sapnap tried to explain.

"Wasn't the intention?" Karl asked incredulously. "I took you to my mother!"

"Karl-"

"You threw my hand away, you practically shoved me off you," Karl said. "You introduced me as *a knight from the palace*. And then you sent me off back to the palace alone so you can talk to your *whoever* that was- I don't understand, am I breaking your masculinity? Am I embarrassing you, am I-"

"I'm not embarrassed-"

"So then what the hell was that?" Karl's voice raised to a volume that Sapnap had never heard before.

"That was my father!" Sapnap yelled.

Neither of them meant for this to happen. Neither of them wanted to have a screaming match and fight about anything. But the silence that followed that statement was louder than the screaming that it followed. Karl took this time to finally look at Sapnap's face. He was still sheet white, forehead covered in beads of sweat from his run back to the palace. Sapnap placed a hand on his temple, brushing his hair back to regain composure.

"My father-" Sapnap gulped, trying to start his explanation. "My father isn't like your mother, okay? I don't see him other than the occasional him passing through town for a few weeks every other year, and even then it's not my choice."

"So what? You don't want me to meet your father?" Karl asked. "Thanks, that's wonderful to hear." He said sarcastically.

"I don't like my father. I hate him, actually. He has my sister, so I can't fully cut him off. He's a terrible person, he's a really terrible person," Sapnap said. "I could be George's number two and he still asks me why I'm not head guard, or why I'm not, I don't fucking know, like a steward. He will always criticize me, he will always-"

Karl was still seething with anger, but maybe now he could see the fear at the back of Sapnap's eyes. Sapnap, who George describes as a soul forged in fire, had never looked so weak and scared.

"And I know-" Sapnap's voice cracked. "And I know that he doesn't understand. He won't understand us," Sapnap said slowly. "I don't want you to see that. Alright? I don't want you to see him disgusted at me, and disgusted at you. He's not gonna see you like I do, he's not going to love you like I do. I don't want you to ever see someone not appreciate you, or even demean you to your face."

Karl started to feel the desperation between every word Sapnap was speaking. He knows Sapnap is struggling, George said so. Sapnap has always had a hard time articulating his feelings.

"He-" Sapnap's breath hitched. "If I can do anything- If I want to do anything in this life, it's to protect you so that you will never have to meet him. I don't even want the potential, of you hearing a single mean or unsavory thing from him, not you. Not if I can do anything about it."

"Sapnap, what you did-" Karl said softly. "I *felt* disgusting, I *felt* like an embarrassment. And it hurts so much more thinking that it came from you."

Sapnap's heart broke and the sound of Karl's voice.

"Karl," Sapnap begged. "I'm sorry."

There were about a thousand more words that he had to say. An explanation, an excuse, a thousand and one words. But Sapnap kept quiet. He knew Karl deserved better than him trying to justify what he'd done to him.

"I'm sorry," Sapnap was all Sapnap said.

"Is this just how it's always going to happen?" Karl asked. "We can only tell things to each other when we fight? When we're angry?"

Sapnap didn't want to say anything else, but he knew Karl was right. He thought back to when he first confessed his feelings to Karl. It was in the heat of the moment, in a jealous rage that he blurted out and asked Karl on a date.

He remembered the blueberry and mint taste on Karl's lips when he kissed him. He remembered the butterflies in his stomach when he realized that Karl liked him back.

"You could've told me," Karl said. "I would've played along. I would've—" Karl hastily wiped the tears off his face, looking up at the ceiling to stop more from spilling out. "And you—" Karl was struggling, trying to speak through his shuddering breath. "And you just told me you loved me, for the first time, during a fight."

"Well I do. Of course, I do," Sapnap said softly. "And I'm sorry if what I did, earlier or ever in the course of our relationship, has ever convinced you that I don't."

Karl slowly tilted his head down until he met Sapnap's eyes. Sapnap slowly moved forward, raising a hand to Karl's face so he could wipe away the tears.

"I am so sorry," Sapnap said, slowly moving his head until their foreheads touch. "I love you," he whispered. "I love you so much and I'm sorry I hurt you."

Karl brought his hand up, placing it over Sapnap's as he melted into his touch. Karl leaned forward, the slightest bit, letting Sapnap know that he could come closer.

Sapnap hesitated, afraid that anything he does next is going to hurt Karl again. Slowly, as gently as he could, he pulled Karl closer and placed a sweet kiss on his lips.

"I love you too," Karl finally said after they pulled away.

"Forgive me?" Sapnap said softly.

"Maybe," Karl replied.

"That's fair," Sapnap said.

Karl finally met Sapnap's eyes. He brought his hand up to Sapnap's face, his turn now to wipe Sapnap's tear-stained face.

"I love you too," Karl repeated. "Your problems are now my problems too. You tell me things. No more hiding."

"I told him," Sapnap blurted out. "After you left, I told him."

Karl looked at Sapnap sympathetically, waiting for the continuation of his story, but Sapnap only shook his head silently.

"I'm sorry," Karl said.

"It's okay, you're worth it," Sapnap smiled sadly.

--

*I love you.*

Good, or bad, even if they're not okay right now, they will be.

Because Karl Jacobs loved Sapnap, and Sapnap loved him back.

And that was enough.

## End Notes

Twitter: @noimnotJJ

As always, Kudos and comments are appreciated.

Comment suggestions for future fics.

(Trying to branch out to non-royalty AUs, so drop those off if you want to as well)

For the people following the series, I will try to get the Protective Dream fic out sometime this weekend.

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!